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WALLY ROSE - SEE PAGE 20

PUBLISHED BY

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF CLASSIC RAGTIME

FROM THE GALLERY OF ...

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UNDENIABLY AUTHENTIC MASTERPIECES !

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RAGTIME...
UNDER YOUR HAT

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

is a non-profit organization for people interested in Ragtime. Services include the publication of this magazine about all phases of classic Ragtime, the printing of sheet music, and maintenance of hard-to-find Ragtime books and records. We also record on our own label and associate label, bringing you performances of both old and new Ragtime.

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EDITORIAL.....

The St. Louis Ragtime Festival took place on the 16th and 17th of June aboard the Goldenrod Showboat. The festival attracts ragophiles from different parts of the continent i.e. California, Louisiana, Colorado, Canada etc. It must be quite a chore to arrange and organize a show such as this and keep it interesting.
There should be more effort made to keep the festival 'ragtime', however. Too many such gatherings are inclined to slip away into the Dixieland element or into the area of modern show tunes. Why should the works of Joplin, Turpin, Scott and Lamb, as well as other ragtime composers, go unheard while strains of "Hello Dolly" and "Winchester Cathedral" desecrate the ragtime cause? Folks who come from as far away as the just-mentioned locales should not be let down. I guess, though, that it is very easy to be critical when someone else is doing all the work. It must be said that it is an ever-improving 'show', and, next year should be really great.(See article in this issue).

A tip of the "Society" hat to the recently formed Maple Leaf Club for their comprehensive article relative to The Ragtime Society which appeared in their Rag Times Vol.1 No.2. Also, a gentle rap on the knuckles, since Dick Zimmerman's reference to the "Ragtime Society in Canada" infers Canadian scope, and Karl Kramer's reference to the "Ontario Ragtime Society" infers provincial scope. We were afraid to look further for fear of discovering that we only circulate to relatives and close friends, when in fact, we are of WORLD WIDE prominence.

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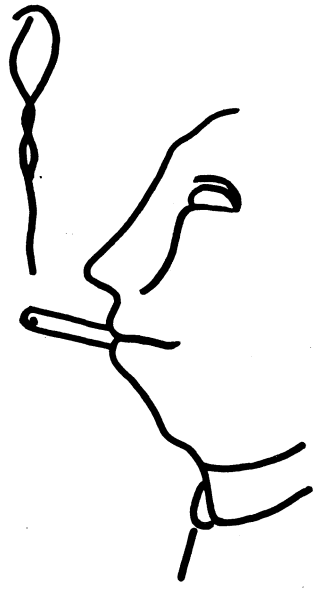

bart howard

By TOM SHEA

BART HOWARD WAS THE DETROIT RAGTIME KING. BY THE MIDDLE TEENS, DETROIT "TICKLERS" WERE THROWING IN AS MANY HOWARD LICKS AS POSSIBLE AND MAKING THEIR HEADQUARTERS AT THE TURF CAFE WHERE HE PLAYED.

Bart Howard was a very good piano player. At least he's been described that way by people who ought to know like Don Redman, Willie the Lion Smith, Perry Bradford, Eubie Blake, and several others. He was the best in Detroit for a number of years according to George Walls, Dewey Lee, and Don McCullough who were part of the Detroit entertainment world when Howard was active. They knew him and gave me what little information I have about him.

Bart Howard was born about 1880 in Detroit or Toledo, Ohio. By 1915 he was playing at the Turf Cafe located at Mullett and Hastings Streets in one of the toughest neighborhoods in Detroit. It was and still is a center of vice in Detroit. The joint across the street from the Turf was called "The Bucket of Blood." It was a good name for it too because fist fights, broken heads, and knifings were said to break out in the place with bloody regularity.

While the Turf's clientele was probably just as seamy, it was at least not so given to violence. It included gamblers, pushers, policy writers, pimps, queens, goodtime charlies, just plain drunks, and piano players - especially piano players. There were guys like "The Ape" with arms that reached almost to his knees, or George Curtis who played with just three fingers of each hand. Why? Nobody knows. He had the usual five on each hand. It was just his style. And "Snow", a very black man with red eyes and red hair who was a "writer" for several Detroit policy houses with colorful names like "Wolverine", "Yellow Dog", and "Three Trains." Snow played the piano as a sideline. The numbers racket was his game. He liked to play for the Chitterlin' Struts, or Blue Monday parties as they were called in Detroit. Blue Monday meant nobody went to work. They knocked off to attend parties that started Monday morning, or sometimes Sunday evening, and lasted for a couple of days. At the parties they had "Lightning" (moonshine whiskey) and chitterlings (hog guts) for a dollar a plate. Snow's fingers all looked like thumbs. Maybe that's why he could sit at the piano for 10 or 12 hours straight like he did. He only made a couple of bucks for playing, but he was "writing" all the time. He made 25 cents on the dollar writing numbers and he wrote a lot of numbers at those parties.

The Turf's owner, Bock Helm, kept two piano players on hand to make sure the place never stopped rocking. They alternated at the keyboard. One was Willie Dale, the other was Bart Howard who was by then Detroit's ragtime king.

Howard was a small man who always played with a cigar between his teeth. His hands were so small he had trouble reaching octaves so he had a man named Dr. Alexander operate on them, cutting the skin between his thumb and index finger to increase his reach. After the operation, and after wearing gloves with a marble between each finger for what must have been an uncomfortable period of time, Howard was able to reach 10ths. In spite of all the attention he gave his hands, or maybe because of it - who knows, he was a strong piano player. He didn't play background music. When you came into the Turf while Howard was playing you listened.

Ragtime contests were held at the Turf Cafe. Three judges awarded a prize to the performer with the best accuracy and technique. Dewey Lee says the judges were usually big shots - politicians, real judges, or other musicians.

Although there were usually many contestants, the real battle was between Howard for Detroit, and a man named Johnny Waters for (and from) Toledo. When they stepped up to the piano, the always heavy side betting got frantic. Dewey Lee says Waters had one of the best left hands he ever heard. He must not have been any slouch with his right either because Earl Hines has been quoted as saying he tried to copy Waters' right hand style in the early 20's: "Very few pianists were using right hand 10ths then, but Johnny Waters could reach 12ths and 13ths and play melodies with the inside three fingers at the same time. I tried for Johnny with my right hand."

One feature of Howard's early style was the mixing of the ragtime oompah bass - using octaves, single note root and fifth, or tenths alternately with chords - with tight running figures. He used runs of sixths, fourths expanded to sixths, and others; some as short little fillups, others of a more extended nature. Dewey Lee and Don McCullough, both students of Howard, used them in their playing. They give a "tension-release" effect, like winding some sort of spring up tight and letting it go - as when the ragtime oompah starts again. By introducing an element of rhythmic interruption or suspension to the regularity of the ragtime oompah bass, Howard perhaps moved Detroit ragtime in the direction of jazz. Dewey Lee says this way of playing ragtime became, more or less, a Detroit style and was adopted by many locals.

Howard sometimes worked with his wife Corrine who was a singer. She was small, light skinned, and very pretty. Bart and Corrine must have made a good team because they were the first Negro entertainers to work the elegant old Griswold House Hotel located at West Grand Boulevard and Griswold in Detroit. There they entertained many notables of the day including Lillian Russell and Diamond Jim Brady.

By about 1920, Howard was working with his own band at the Royal Garden cabaret at St. Antoine and Madison, also in Detroit. In keeping with the times, they played mostly jazz and pop. Later in the 20's he and the band moved to Thomas' Inn in Windsor, Ontario.

Howard wrote several rags and other pieces of music, but none were published or recorded as far as anyone knows. Although he is said to have made some rolls for Q.R.S. about 1920, Mike Montgomery has been unable to locate any after a search of Q.R.S. records. Dewey Lee plays one Howard number called "Detroit Rags", but with this one exception all of Howard's tunes have vanished.

Howard's career seems to have followed the pattern of so many ragtime and jazz pioneers - a moment of prominence followed by obscurity. During the late 20's and early 30's Howard played in a succession of small bars around Detroit and lived alone in a rooming house. He died in the middle 30's.

TEMPO 80

JOHN FAIRHEAD

With the introduction of Tempo 80 in the previous issue of "The Ragtimer" I announced a basic literary objective, which was, to write about the Ragtime Society itself, its development, its operation, its future plans, etc. and outlined specific areas where concentrated effort had been expended to streamline "Society" operation.

In this issue, continuing in this tradition, we'll examine the fundamental building blocks of our organization, define the specific elements, and introduce a precept for making The Ragtime Society more meaningful to the membership.

Society, by definition, means the system or mode of life adopted by a body of individuals for the purpose of harmonious co-existence or for mutual benefit or for the promotion of a common purpose by means of meetings, publications, etc. Therefore, when we speak of The Ragtime Society we are actually referring to the members who have united to give the "Society" an identity.

Categorically speaking, there are three "Society" member types.

Firstly, there is the "here to-day gone to-morrow" type, who becomes a member, then after the first year of membership silently fades away never to be heard from again. We can only surmise from this, that either we have not catered to his particular requirements, or else, and this seems more likely, his idea of what constitutes ragtime is distorted. After all, Alexander's Ragtime Band just isn't ragtime.

Secondly, there is the "strong silent" type, who has become a member of the "Society" and who continues to renew his membership faithfully each year, orders records and/or sheet music, but who never writes to comment on our organization, and hence, never actually participates in The Ragtime Society.

Thirdly, there is the "contributing member" type, who is similar to the "strong silent" type with one important difference. Our contributing member is involved in the "society" by virtue of his participation. Whether contributing articles, clip-outs from other publications, or just commenting on The Ragtime Society undertakings, this member type is helping to create a definite "Society" image.

In summation, there isn't too much that can be said about the "here to-day gone to-morrow" type...and which fortunately is a diminishing breed...other than to say, that if a particular area of our operation does not fulfil your requirements, tell us about it, and if ragtime is not as you expected, take the time to listen objectively to "classic" examples of the art. I'm sure you'll find it exhilarating.

Perhaps, the "strong silent" type should be left well enough alone, however, I can't help but feel that the dictates of a relatively few active members are establishing the pattern for ALL members. So, if you haven't written to The Ragtime Society say...in the past six months, drop us a short note, telling us what you like, or more important, what you don't like about our organization. Let's convert all second category members into third category members.

Finally, when you think of ragtime, think of The Ragtime Society, then think "Society", recall its meaning...a body of individuals united to promote a common ideal...then, WRITE.

SOUNDS FAMILIAR

ROGER HANKINS

THE CYCLE OF 5ths

Many familiar chord progressions consist of nothing more than an extended run of dominant 7ths otherwise known as the Cycle of 5ths. A good example of the complete cycle of 5ths (all 12 dominant 7ths in sequence - one progression per bar) is found in the chorus of "Redhead Rag". A nearly complete example is found in "Spanish Flea" which goes through 9 consecutive progressions. At the rate of 3 chords to a bar, it only needed one more bar to complete the cycle.

Perhaps the most familiar cycle of 5ths pattern is the four chord sequence of "Sweet Georgia Brown", "Alabama Jubilee", "Shine On Harvest Moon", "Lazy River", "A Good Man is Hard to Find", etc. This pattern, as can be expected, appears many times in the 'Rags': Contentment(4th), Ragtime Oriole(4th), Meadowlark, etc. However most of the common cycle of 5ths patterns start off with the tonic chord before beginning their run. They might be summarized as follows (key of C);

C - G - C	(G category)
C - D - G - C	(D ")
C - A - D - G - C	(A ")
C - E - A - D - G - C	(E ")
C - B - E - A - D - G - C	(B ")

The first category is elementary. The D category also is too well known to bother with. Suffice it to say, "Missouri Rag", "Creole Belles" (trio), "When My Sugar Walks Down the Street", and at least a thousand others use this chord pattern. The A category has many variations perhaps the most common one being C - A - D - D - G - G - C - C : "Maybe", "Silver Dollar", "Tammany", "Peacherine Rag" (3rd) and at least a hundred others that come readily to mind. But even this common pattern can be manipulated to the point where only a handful of songs conform to it. If the subdominant (F) is used in the 9th bar about the only survivors would be "Somebody Else is Taking my Place" and two old timers from the Sam Fox catalogue, "Frat March" and "Harmony Rag" (trio). Perhaps a compressed version of the same pattern should be mentioned C/A - D - G - C - F etc. This includes "Please Go Way and Let Me Sleep" found in Max Morath's 'Guide to Ragtime' and the 3rd theme of "On Easy Street" which was reprinted in last years sheet music club. By coincidence "On Easy Street" also contains a compressed version of "My Wild Irish Rose."

The E category is of major interest. A nice steady pattern, 2 bars for each chord is found in Joe Jordan's "That Teasing Rag", while "Buzzer Rag" and "One Alone" (the Desert Song) follow the pattern of "Liebestraume". But one pattern in this category stands head and shoulders over the rest : C - E - A - A - D - G - C - G. The tunes that fit this pattern sound like an honor roll of hits: "Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone", "Five Foot Two, Eyes Of Blue",

"Music, Maestro, Please", "Basin Street Blues", "Charleston", "Darkness on the Delta", "Clarinet Marmalade", "Maori", etc. etc. Except for a minor chord in the 5th bar "You're Nobody Till Somebody Loves You" could be included. A more extensive use of the minor chords keeps "Black Bottom Stomp" (2nd) off this list. Surprisingly, none of the commercially available classic rags use this pattern, although a compressed version is found in "Don't Jazz Me Rag" (3rd theme - bars 3 through 8). However some of the lesser known rags use it (i.e.) "Red Onion Rag" by Kidwell and Steventon. Some modern day rags also make use of it such as "Storyville Sport" and Joe Glover's "Celestial Rag".

Examples are hard to find in the B category. About the only ones to come to mind are "Red Roses For A Blue Lady", "Mr. Sandman", "Blue", and "Blue Turning Grey Over You." There is also a "Five Pennies" by Red Nichols, "Serenade To Sweden" by Duke Ellington, and "New Orleans" by Hoagy Carmichael.

"Just In Time" by Jule Styne goes through 6 successive progressions (E through B flat). This old pro of Broadway can give us a practical application of the cycle of 5ths...How to write a new song about an old song. Back in the early 40's he wrote "I've Heard That Song Before" which follows the classic sequence of "That Teasing Rag". A couple of years later he wrote "There Goes That Song Again" which follows the old reliable pattern of "Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone."

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SR-036 The Princess Rag (Scott) 1919
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We still have some reprint copies of Scott Joplin's opera - 'Treemonisha' , published in 1911. The opera is 230 pages, punched with the standard 3 holes to fit ring-binders....each $15.00 ppd.

R E C O R D S

A number of commercially-produced records are stocked by the "Society" and they are listed here on the next few pages along with postpaid prices. From time to time, we will add new and interesting discs on ragtime to this list. Also, all records reviewed in "THE RAGTIMER" are stocked by the "Society".

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Contains 11 Campbell numbers (Maple Leaf Rag, Barber Shop Rag, Salome's Slow Drag, Fragment, Brun's Slow Drag, Short Rag, Essay In Ragtime, Slow and Easy, Blue Rag, Lulu White, Reminiscences), and 7 of Johnson's (Kansas City Stomps, Twelfth Street Rag, When the Sun Goes Down, Cannonball Rag, Frog-I-More Rag, Dink's Blues, Original Jelly Roll Blues,
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(FOLKWAYS: FW-3562).....$5.50

√ CL-005 ESSAY IN RAGTIME. Played by Ann Charters.
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CL-006 TREEMONISHA. Utah State University Concert Chorale with Carolyn Lewis-soprano and Ted Puffer-director & pianist.
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(PORTENTS-3).....$6.00

√ CL-007 PIANO ROLL RAGTIME. Reproduced from player piano rolls.
Contains States Rag Medley No. 8, St. Louis Rag, Maple Leaf, Possum and Taters, Jungle Time, Grace and Beauty, Stop Time Rag, Pineapple, Euphonic Sounds, Cascade, Pickles and Peppers, Something Doing, Red Pepper, Powder and Kismet Rags.
(SOUNDS-1201).....$5.50

CL-008 REUNION IN RAGTIME. Featuring Eubie Blake, Joe Jordan and Charles Thompson. Narrated by Bob Darch.
Contains Meet Me In St. Louis,-Louis; Bunch o' Blackberries, Maori, Lovie Joe, Lily Rag, Memories of You, Teasin' Rag, Ragtime Discussion, Old Black Crow, Waitin' For The Robert E. Lee, That's Jelly Roll, Until, Delmar Rag, Dora Dean, Dictys On 7th Avenue and Broadway in Dahomey.
(STEREODDITIES: C1900).....$5.50

CL-009 THEY TORE MY PLAYHOUSE DOWN. Burt Bales and Paul Lingle.
Contains Temptation Rag, Wild Man Blues, Mister Joe, Kansas City Man Blues, Chicago Breakdown, Melancholy, New Orleans Joys, Midnight Mama - played by Bales; Yellow Dog Blues, Pastime Rag No. 3, London Blues, Blame It On The Blues, Memphis Blues, Sweet Substitute, Sidewalk Blues, Black Bottom Stomp - played by Lingle.
(GOOD TIME JAZZ: L-12025).....$5.50

CL-010 LUCKEY & THE LION...HARLEM PIANO. Luckey Roberts and Willie "The Lion" Smith.
Contains Nothin', Spanish Fandango, Railroad Blues, Complainin', Inner Space, Outer Space,-played by Roberts; Morning Air, Relaxin', Rippling Water, Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea, Tango La Caprice, Concentratin',-played by Smith.
(GOOD TIME JAZZ: M-12035).....$5.50

CL-011 VINTAGE PIANO, Vol. III. Paul Lingle and Bill Mitchell.
Lingle plays Good Gravy Rag, Muscle Shoals Blues, Maple Leaf Rag, New Orleans Joys, Original Jelly Roll Blues, Ace In The Hole and I've Found A New Baby. Mitchell plays A Tennessee Tantalizer, Harlem Blues, The Pearls, A Ragtime Nightmare, Blues For Paul Lingle, Ragtime Dance, Grandpa's Spells.
(EUPHONIC: ESR-1203) Produced by Paul Affeldt.....$5.50

CL-012 BARRELHOUSE BLUES AND STOMPS. Vol. IV. Features artists:
Speckled Red (Blues On My Brain & All On Account Of YOu), Charlie Rasch (Deep Jungle & Whip It To A Jelly), James Crutchfield (Black Woman & How Long Blues), John Bentley (Greenville Rocks & West Texas Shout), Henry Brown (21st Street Stomp), Buster Wilson (The Egyptian) and Dink Johnson (Miss Clementine From New Orleans & Exactly Like You).
(EUPHONIC: ESR-1204) Produced by Paul Affeldt.....$5.50

CL-013 COMPLETE PIANO WORKS OF SCOTT JOPLIN. "Knocky" Parker.
CL-014 Contains all the Rags, Marches, Cakewalks and Waltzes on two records.
(AUDIOPHILE: AP-71/72).....$11.00

CL-015 COMPLETE PIANO WORKS OF JAMES SCOTT. "Knocky" Parker.
CL-016 Contains all Scott's piano solos on two records.
(AUDIOPHILE: AP-76/77).....$11.00

CL-017 OLD RAGS. "Knocky" Parker.
Contains Whistlin' Rufus, Climax Rag, The Pearls, Daintiness Rag, Bond Street, Fig Leaf Rag, Euphonic Sounds, Mr. Joe, Alligator Crawl, Georgia Camp Meeting, Frog Legs Rag and Wild Flower.
(AUDIOPHILE: AP-49).....$5.50

CL-018 'ST. LOUIS RAGTIMERS. Vol. I.
Contains Shake That Thing, Lulu White, Sailing Down The Chesapeake Bay, Up Jumped The Devil, Mahogany Hall Stomp, Steamboat Stomp, King Chanticleer, Waitin' For The Robert E. Lee, Gatemouth, Canal Street Blues, Ice Cream, Maple Leaf Rag, Chatanooga Stomp and Gut Bucket Blues.
(AUDIOPHILE: AP-75).....$5.50

CL-019 ST. LOUIS RAGTIMERS. Vol. II.
Contains Cakewalking Babies From Home, Riverside Blues, Georgia Swing, Moving Day, Black Mountain Rag, Dead Man Blues, Chestnut Valley Rag, Bye And Bye, I Ain't Rough, Tank Town Bump, When Ragtime Rosie Ragged The Rosary, Bucksnort Stomp, Ely Green's Cakewalk, They Gotta Quit Kickin' My Dawg Around.
(AUDIOPHILE: AP-81).....$5.50

CL-020 RAGTIME JUBILEE. Tony Parenti and his Ragtime Gang with "Knocky Parker. Details in second issue of "THE RAGTIMER" (Record Review-Tex Wyndham).
(JAZZOLOGY: J-21).....$5.50

CL-021
CL-022 see Record Reviews in this issue.....each $5.50

REPRINT CLUB NEWS

The final five numbers in Chapter III of the Reprint Club have just been mailed. Here are the titles:

✓ (1) THE LION TAMER RAG (A Syncopated Fantasia) 1913 - MARK JANZA.
✓ (2) HUMPTY DUMPTY (A Novelty Rag) 1914 - CHARLEY STRAIGHT.
✓ (3) MAKING CIDER (Jazz Fox Trot - A Rube Rag) 1918 - HENRY LODGE.
✓ (4) VARIETY RAG - 1912 - HARRY AUSTIN TIERNEY.
✓ (5) PLEASANT MOMENTS (Ragtime Waltz) 1909 - SCOTT JOPLIN.

Once again, we were able to supply Reprint Club members with 24 'hard-to-obtain' rags. Continued support of this project is helping THE RAGTIME SOCIETY spread the 'word' and, to the executive, it has been most encouraging. A large THANK YOU to those collectors who have loaned valuable scores for reprint.

Subscriptions for "REPRINT CLUB - CHAPTER IV" are now being received. The price will stay the same - $10.00. Terms and conditions will be as always. (For information on the "REPRINT CLUB" and how it operates, check Second issue of 'THE RAGTIMER' pg. 5). We have a wealth of new material, so, how about sending in the subscription form. Make life more interesting by learning some new rags!

Winging It with TOM SHEA

Hot dog! I got a letter. I just decoded it on my Ragtime Society Secret Message Decoder and so without further ado, here it is.

"There is, I believe, not one person today who can play ragtime the way it was played at the turn of the century. Lost forever are the techniques, the influences, and environment that contributed to nurturing ragtime. The great void between early ragtime and its revival has been filled with new forms of music, good and bad, which makes the return to early ragtime impossible."

"Most players today are either jazz oriented or influenced, thus their rags are swung or 'jazzed-up' and improvised in the manner of jazz. Today's fine young players cannot be blamed. They aren't able to hear rags played by the classicists anymore, and the older players have long since given up ragtime for jazz or popular music. I doubt if Joplin could play rags today had he remained active in music through the years because of the jazz or popular music influence. That would be like asking Jelly Roll Morton to revert to his early style of playing and throw out the rich melodic style he developed through the years."

"If we consider the influences on early ragtime, it can be seen why rags didn't swing. A big factor was the cakewalk which was a dance-march and definitely did not swing. Also early ragtime was the Negroe's closest attempt to throw off the stigma of so-called 'Coon Music.' White music didn't swing, march music didn't swing, both were financially successful, therefore ragtime composed by serious Negroes didn't swing. Indeed, how could it be swingy or jazzy music since it wasn't developed yet, or at least was just another form of non-serious Negro music?"

"Two clues that we have today as to the way rags were actually played are piano rolls and Joseph Lamb's recording. Joseph Lamb is the only ragtime player who was in a musical deep freeze since the days of the Stark Music Company. Actually, most people thought he was dead before he was rediscovered. Admittedly he couldn't play the way he used to, but still there is strong evidence that his rags were played 'straight', without swinging, and at a slow tempo."

"Old piano rolls of rags were sometimes doctored but only to the extent, I believe, that the music was made to flow evenly and to correct possible flaws rather than materially revise the musical content. The hand played rolls are played 'straight' and do not swing as compared to hand played rolls of Morton, Johnson and Waller. Supposedly, Joplin recorded piano rolls under the same conditions Morton did. One shouldn't dismiss piano roll rags as so much mechanical clap trap, since not only musical content, but the technique of the performer is to be heard."

"Consequently, I say to the young players who wish to play serious ragtime music, play it straight, do not play it fast, and play it as a march rather than swinging it."

Very truly yours,
William T. Webb

I'd like to thank Mr. Webb for taking the time to write in his opinions to us. Your comments on Mr. Webb's letter or on other topics having to do with ragtime are invited.

THE PRE-HISTORY OF RAGTIME

KAY C. THOMPSON ----from "JAZZ JOURNAL".

In common with most of the world's best loved music, ragtime evolved from dancing. Unlike the early folk blues, which were a vocal music deriving from work songs and spirituals, ragtime was an instrumental art of a complex sort. Before the end of the 19th century, it had achieved an advanced state of notation. Furthermore, unlike the early folk blues, which expressed the inevitable reactions of an oppressed and sensitive people, ragtime was by no means a music of social protest. On the contrary, it was music of an altogether opposite mood intended to be enjoyed in and for itself. I stress this aspect to call attention to the fact that the Afro-American, who invented both types of music, is emotionally elastic and, like the rest of us, capable of experiencing many moods.

In evolving ragtime, the Afro-American utilized older European dance material to suit his own needs and purposes. In proceeding in this fashion, he acted in the highest creative sense. Moreover, he conducted himself in the best Western musical tradition, of which he was fast becoming a part. The point deserves comment, for the Afro-American bears little or no relation, ethnologically or culturally, to the diverse peoples of the African continent, past or present. He is a product of our national melting pot as completely as any Anglo-American, Franco-American, or Italo-American. The same holds true of his music, and it should be added that this conclusion can be supported on musical grounds alone, without relying on involved theories borrowed from anthropology, sociology, or any of the other inexact sciences.

The dance material which the Afro-American adapted and transformed came from many different sources: quadrilles, waltzes, marches, polkas, mazurkas, and the like. The presence of imported European dance material may be accounted for quite readily. We had a heterogeneous population, and had not had time to originate native steps of our own. In many instances, the early derivations left their imprint upon many later rags. Portions of "Maple Leaf Rag" suggest the unmistakeable traces of the polka; portions of "King Porter Stomp" (and stomp is merely a latter-day name for rag) suggest the stately graces of the minuet.

The same point may be demonstrated by other evidence. Most rags were composed of several strains related through similarity or contrast. This use of several strains had formal precedents in a number of the 18th and early 19th century European dances, such as the quadrille, which commonly consisted of no less than five different figures.

As soon as the Afro-American undertook to transform earlier European dance material, newer and more appropriate dance steps commenced to make their appearance. Thus, in the 1880's, early rags were often called cakewalks. They were so named after an Afro-American dance step of somewhat mixed origins. In its earliest reported form, the cakewalk was an intricately executed walking step. It was danced some years before the Civil War. Couples formed a square, the men placing themselves on the inside. The music was played in a moderate march tempo, while the dancers strutted along, performing neat manoeuvres at each of the corners. One or more judges passed upon the talents of the competing couples, eliminating them by turn, until the remaining pair of entrants were declared to be the winners, in recognition of which

they were awarded a large and impressive cake. Obviously, the dance acquired its name from this fact. Following the Civil War, a number of variations were devised, all of which were called cakewalks. While we are on the subject, it is fitting to mention that the word "ragtime" is simply a shortened form of raggedy time, or ragged tempo, a term meaning syncopated. This abbreviated form appears to have come into general use as a means of distinguishing cakewalks from other dance compositions in which syncopation was not as prominent a feature.

From the foregoing, it should be plain that early ragtime had a lengthy history, the first cakewalks having been danced perhaps a hundred years ago. The existence of a well-defined Afro-American dance step at that remote date is not as remarkable as it might seem. It has been estimated, for example, that as much as two-thirds of all Southern dance music was furnished by Afro- American musicians in the years just before the Civil War. This implies a rather considerable body of early dance musicians about whom little or nothing has been written in books dealing with jazz history. Musically, they must have been reasonably proficient, for it may be surmised that they came into being to provide music of a conventional sort for social affairs attended by members of the Southern aristocracy, whose tastes would have been fairly sophisticated. Consequently, if when, and as these early musicians indulged their cakewalk instincts, they probably did so at functions of their own. The latter possibility is entirely in keeping with the view that the early cakewalk was an involved step calling for music executed with more than rudimentary skill.

Not much is known regarding the dance steps that preceded the first cakewalk. While the cakewalk combined features common to several European dances, it seems reasonable to suppose that it also retained some of the characteristics of the early plantation dances of the 18th century. Plainly enough, these dances antedated the spirituals and the early folk blues. It is significant, too, that these same plantation dances are believed to have inspired the Afro-American to invent the banjo, often called our only national instrument. This belief is based upon the fact that the banjo existed some years before 1800, and would have provided precisely the sort of rhythmic accompaniment that dancers would have required to perform steps of a simple kind.

In remarking upon the banjo, I am mindful that cakewalk history furnishes a striking example of the manner in which musical instruments, dance steps, and suitable music evolve, one contained within the others. I realize, of course, that the banjo has lost favor in recent years. Nevertheless, it exerted a decided influence on early jazz, and its influence persisted until a relatively late date. The orchestral conception of ragtime piano, for instance, resulted to a considerable extent from an attempt to score several banjo parts for an instrument of large proportions. In view of this, it is not at all surprising to find that early player pianos were sometimes equipped with banjo effects that could be used at will. Corny as such devices might sound to modern ears, they must have pleased the purists of an earlier day.

The peak period of ragtime composition came in the 1890's, carrying over into the 1900's. It is noteworthy that ragtime writers anticipated many of the most pleasing musical elements that we meet with in the best jazz of the 1920's. They freely utilized the essential features that we encounter in the later music of Oliver, Dodds, Armstrong, Morton, Bechet and others. To mention just a few: syncopation, the use of added or passing notes, breaks, stop choruses, anticipated chords and complicated progressions, complex counter-rhythmic patterns, the ensemble conception, together with the same clean, precise, staccato manner of execution. The presence of marked similarities cannot be dismissed as coincidence, for as everyone knows, the New Orleans repertoire included a large number of rags. In fact, according to Jelly Roll Morton, Buddy Bolden's Band was really a ragtime outfit. My authority for this statement is none other than R. J. Carew, a profound student of ragtime and an intimate acquaintance of Jelly.

If any of my readers care to pursue the matter of musical resemblances at great-

er length, I suggest that they ask a friendly pianist to run over some of the compositions of Joplin, Turpin, or Scott. Of course, it should be clearly understood that these numbers must be played exactly as the composers wrote them, otherwise the experiment will serve no useful purpose. While they are at it, let them conclude with Liszt's "Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2". Assuming that the pianist in question can cope with it, they will experience some new surprises when they hear the striding bass passages, the grace notes, dotted eighths, thirds, and off-beat accents in the right hand. This particular classical composition is not unique. The point is, early ragtime composers knew their music. Some, like Turpin, had received previous classical training; Joplin had composed conventional waltzes before he turned to ragtime. This aspect of the matter has not been sufficiently emphasized, else the notion, notorious in the 1920's, that early jazz musicians were musical illiterates, would never have gained acceptance.

It should now be clear that ragtime followed a course of development independent of that of the early folk blues. In short, the two types of music were evolved under different sets of circumstances in response to entirely different needs. I offer this in refutation of the long-standing notion that jazz evolved from the folk blues and that ragtime was an offshoot of no consequence. As we have already seen, ragtime had a great deal in common with later jazz. It was, in short, the fundamental factor in the evolution of later jazz, linking the cakewalk of pre-Civil War days with the dance music following World War I. Furthermore, it can readily be demonstrated, solely on the evidence of published sheet music, that the early folk blues did not exert any appreciable influence on jazz until the beginning of the post-ragtime period, in about 1905. The folk blues were introduced at this time-on the premise that they were valid material, the musical possibilities of which had not been fully explored in dance terms, which deserved to be considered by a newer generation of composers on an equal basis with previously used material from other sources.

Seen in this light, it should be apparent that the jazz blues of Handy, Williams, et al., were merely adapted folk blues material incorporated within a framework of earlier ragtime conceptions. Moreover, it should be noted that the union of ragtime and the folk blues was not an unmixed blessing. Frequently, it was exploited with musically disastrous results, the best features of both becoming lost in the shuffle. However, plenty of good music did result from the fusion of elements described. In fact, by the 1920's, they had become so thoroughly intermingled that it is no coincidence that "Dippermouth Blues" and "Sugar Foot Stomp" are titles equally applicable to the same number.

The influence of the folk blues upon a firmly established ragtime tradition was felt principally along literary lines. They supplied a story, a tale, or a ballad that evoked a particular mood or setting. Understandably, the sentimental character of the subject matter had a more immediate appeal than the relatively severe and uncompromising principles that governed ragtime composition. After all, most of us are incurable romantics at heart. "Home On the Range" or "Careless Love" can move us equally, provided we judge them impartially. Musically speaking, the influence of the folk blues on ragtime conceptions is discernable chiefly in attempts to introduce departures from the diatonic, or European, scale. These deviations, usually called blue notes, were tones sounded between flat and natural. They occurred most frequently in the case of tonic thirds and sevenths, and were used in various chord formations in accordance with a fixed harmonic plan limited originally to twelve bars and later modified to suit dance conventions of a later period.

The prevalence of blue notes in the early folk blues and their absence in rag time can be explained quite easily. Deviations of this kind are not peculiar to the folk blues. They are to be encountered in many kinds of folk music that are the product of untrained human voices. Ragtime, on the other hand, was an instrumental development. In later phases, it was closely identified with the piano. The piano is a fixed tone instrument; instruments of this type do not allow for deviations

from the diatonic scale, and therefore ragtime composers were obliged to observe existing musical conventions. The same situation does not arise, of course, in the case of instruments that lack a fixed tone, such as the clarinet, or trumpet, and thus the latter may be used to simulate blue notes in a reasonably authentic manner.

At this point, it would be appropriate to consider a phenomenon that seems to have eluded the notice of some of our better jazz historians, although it is public property. I am referring here to the fact that ragtime, seemingly the first dance music to be called "swing," precipitated the national dance craze that swept this country in 1912. Up until then, most popular dancing had continued to be a decadent expression of forms originating in the 18th and early 19th centuries. However, as a result of the impetus provided by ragtime, more than a hundred new dance steps were introduced in the three year period following 1912. This simple statistic is cited to dispel the impression that ragtime was confined to the precincts of Storyville. This environmental phase of early New Orleans music has engaged the fancy of our musical Boswells to far too great an extent. Consequently, it is still news to most of us that in those days ragtime was played at church dances up North, the chief complaint being that ragtime was too difficult for most musicians to play, not that it was immoral, or indecent.

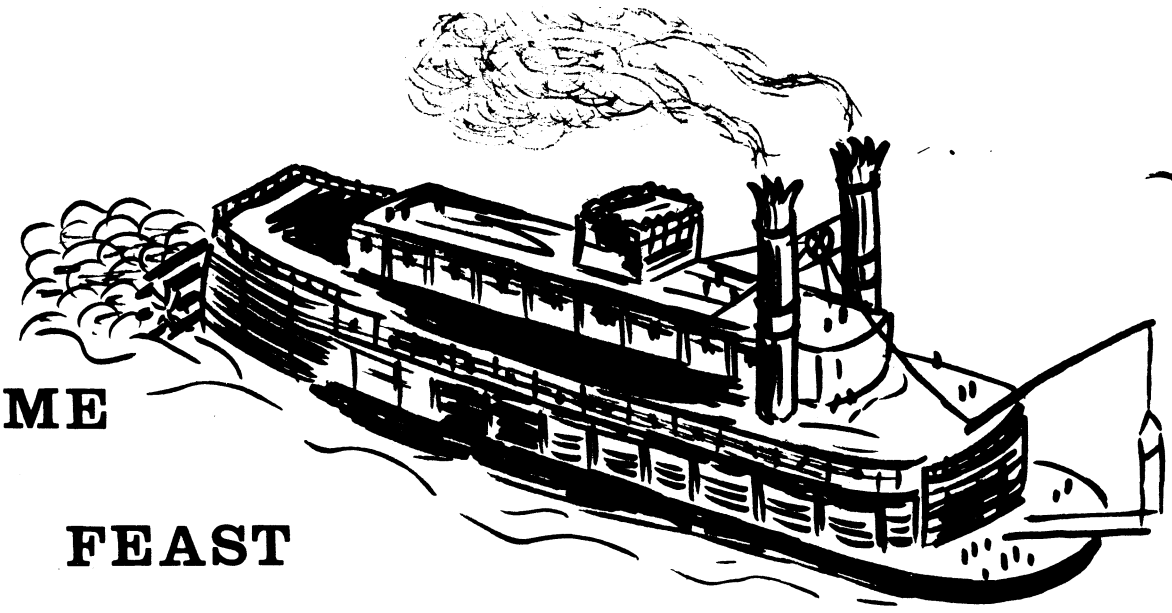
On the strength of the dance craze inspired by ragtime, the Vernon Castles rose to fame and fortune as the nation's dancing teachers. The Castles are entitled to at least a footnote of damnation, for this couple paved the way for the symphonized horrors of Whiteman, Gershwin, and Grofé a decade later. They were the villains, who, before World War I, mind you, sought to decontaminate early jazz dance steps, such as the Turkey Trot, Bunny Hug, and Grizzly Bear, in order to breathe new life into outmoded and exhausted forms of polite ballroom dancing. Their apparent success in this direction was, of course, the feature that prompted others to "purify" the music. Obviously, the motives of all concerned were commercial, rather than pious, for all of the early jazz steps, like the music itself, had evolved from eminently respectable origins, the Camel Walk, for instance, having derived quite frankly from the early 19th century schottische.

ROY J. CAREW 1884 - 1967

Roy J. Carew died after a short illness on Friday, August 4th. He was 83 years old. Mr. Carew was one of the first ragtime authorities to revive interest in the music in the 40's. His articles on Joplin, Morton, Tony Jackson and New Orleans appeared in Record, Jazz Journal and various small jazz publications. Of course, his association with Jelly Roll in Washington in the late 30's and the forming of the Tempo Music Co. to protect Morton on copyrights is well known. He was responsible for Jelly Roll selecting most of the tunes for the New Orleans Memories album and Tavern Tunes for General Records. - George W. Kay -

Roy J. Carew has contributed many articles and information to the "Society" for the enjoyment and edification of all ragtime enthusiasts and will be sadly missed. We thank Mr. Kay for his consideration in notifying us of the death of Mr. Carew. -Ed. -

A RAGTIME FEAST



On June 16th and 17th, the Third Annual St. Louis Ragtime Festival was held. The location - the fine showboat "The Goldenrod", moored on the river-washed levee in St. Louis. I say 'river-washed' because of the swollen Mississippi. The water was much higher than it was two years ago when I attended the Festival. Still and all, it is an exhilarating experience to sit and breathe the river air and listen to the music wend over the waters. One can't help but think of the turn of the century when these same captivating sounds filled the Missouri air and delighted so many people.

The most stirring aspect of a gathering such as this, though, is the eagerness of the musician to perform and the willingness on the part of the spectator to listen. It is not often that one finds such rapport, and it was present here in near concert hall fashion.

It is even worth the trip to St. Louis just to hear The St. Louis Ragtimers, but there was a bonus. What a thrill to hear Wally Rose playing Pastime Rag No. 5 by Artie Matthews; Bob Wright playing some obscure Harry Austin Tierney rag and the sheer pleasure of relaxing for a chat with the 'human encyclopedia of ragtime' Karl Kramer. I always enjoy the outgoing personality of Al Stricker, the learned calm of Trebor Tichenor, the lusty tuba of Don Franz and the precise riverboat horn of Bill Mason. They make up the St. Louis Ragtimers. I wish that they would have played more in the main show which took place three times each evening in the theater. Then, there was Jean Kittrell on piano and vocals, displaying a fine, ebullient style. She's a pretty gal and a school teacher from Illinois and I'm disappointed that I didn't have the chance to ask about the requirements one would have to have to attend her classes. "Doc" Souchon was there with his guitar and raspy voice as well as Danny Barker and his banjo. Both hail from New Orleans.

Of the young set, my award for the best up-and-coming pianist has to go to John Gazzoli,-a young gentleman from St. Louis who held the fort at the Levee House - a quaint bar just down the street from the Goldenrod. He displayed a fine sense of dynamics as well as unusual technical ability. Among the other instrumentalists, I particularly enjoyed the trombone slants of Alan Frederickson of Denver.

It was a fine show that perhaps could have used a little more ragtime in its overall format. But, I enjoy making the trip down and taking part. Before signing off, mention should be made of the fine job Frank Pierson, owner of the Goldenrod, did in organizing the show, acquiring good accommodation for out- of - towners etc. Also, a big THANK YOU to Edy Anton and Betty Redelsheimer, two St. Louis gals, who chauffered me around and boosted my morale. How about more of our Society members including this festival in their plans for next year. - John Arpin.

RECORD REVIEWS

Center CLP-4 "Butch Thompson Plays Jelly Roll Morton - Piano Solos" CL-021

Selections: Perfect Rag, Tom Cat, Shreveport Stomp, New Orleans Joys, Big Fat Ham, Bucktown Stomp, Mamamita, Deep Creek, Stratford Hunch, Naked Dance.

Most of Jelly Roll Morton's recordings have been re-released on Lp in the United States at one time or another, but at the present time, only four Lps by Morton are available. Three are on RCA Victor (LPM 1649, LPV 508 and LPV 524) and are primarily band recordings. The fourth, Mainstream 56020 (also on 6020) is solo piano with vocal by Morton on half of the tracks. Consequently, this album of tunes performed in Morton's pianistic style by a young pianist from the Midwest is a welcome addition to the current catalogue not only because it is a good record, but also because it effectively captures Morton's approach to several of his compositions which do not appear on available Lps.

While reviewing this album, I compared Thompson's performances of 'Shreveport Stomp', 'New Orleans Joys' and 'Big Fat Ham' to the published sheet music of those pieces; I also compared 'Perfect Rag' and 'Shreveport Stomp' to Morton's original piano solos of those tunes for the Gennett label in 1924. These comparisons revealed that Thompson does not attempt to follow the sheet music, but does follow the recordings rather closely.

It should be emphasized, however, that Thompson does not try to copy the recordings. He deviates from them to some extent, and in doing so, he demonstrates an astonishing ability to improvise in Morton's style. This characteristic is particularly evident in the blues 'Deep Creek', for which Thompson has no direct model. To my knowledge, this tune was recorded by Morton only as a band number and has never been published as a piano solo; nevertheless, it is not hard to believe that Thompson's interpretation of 'Deep Creek' is one that might have been adopted by Morton as a solo. Moreover, Thompson's audible foot-tapping, while probably not done in imitation of Morton, gives the whole Lp a feeling reminiscent of Morton's recordings for the Library of Congress.

Although Thompson is a skilled pianist, he does not have Morton's execution or relaxation. Consequently, there are a few spots where the music sounds rushed or forced, as in the repeat of the second strain of 'Shreveport Stomp', or where the beat begins to sound a bit mechanical, as in the closing portion of 'Tom Cat'. These spots are few and far between, however, and are amply compensated for by Thompson's remarkable grasp of Morton's spirit and style.

Morton's original solo performances of seven of these tunes (all except 'Mamamita', 'Deep Creek' and 'Naked Dance') were re-issued on the now-deleted Riverside Lp RLP 12-111. Anyone who already has that record might not feel a need to get this one. Similarly, anyone who does not already have some solo recordings by Morton should begin by getting the Mainstream Lp mentioned above while it is still available.

Otherwise, this album should appeal to anyone who likes ragtime or who enjoys Morton's piano playing or compositions. The program is well-balanced, including fast, medium and slow numbers as well as the two 'Spanish-tinged' tunes, 'New Orleans Joys' and 'Mamamita'. Using Down Beat magazine's familiar five-star scale, I'd give this Lp four -- maybe even four-and-a-half -- stars.

-Tex Wyndham

Philips Mono 70.341
Stereo 840.583 ORIGINAL RAGTIME

Piano Solos - CLAUDE BOLLING

Selections: Waiting For The Robert E. Lee, On The Mississippi. Mississippi Rag, Temptation Rag, Canadian Capers, Perfect Rag, Maple Leaf Rag, Kitten On The Keys, Harlem Strut, Cataract Rag, St. Louis Rag, The Entertainer's Rag.

One is apt to approach this album with justifiable restraint. Claude Bolling is relatively unknown, at least to this reviewer, the record which was produced in Paris, contains liner notes in French, and finally, some of the selections are not ragtime. However, the liner notes do contain a reference to The Ragtime Society, and if for no other reason than this, the album warranted further consideration. The Ragtime Society is in good company, for Bolling is endowed with the ragtime spirit. His dynamics and phrasing are in the classical tradition, tempi are appropriate, and the overall effect is musically pleasing. Robert E. Lee and On The Mississippi, although not considered ragtime compositions, by this scribe, are nevertheless arranged and performed competently. A staunch supporter of the play-as-written school might cringe at the extraneous ornamentation, and to a lesser extent, the melodic liberties, but for the most part the selections are tastefully interpreted. Canadian Capers and the Kitten were pleasant novelty numbers when introduced some 15 or 20 million performances ago, but unlike rare old wine, do not improve with age. Claude Bolling does make them palatable. The delicate nuances of Temptation Rag identify Bolling as a significant ragtime artist and exemplify his pianistic maturity. Perfect Rag and Harlem Strut are performed in the swinging stride piano style of the middle 20's and give the Morton and James P Johnson compositions toe-tapping exuberance. Mississippi, Maple Leaf, Cataract, and St. Louis are all performed with dedicated enthusiasm, although I can't help but wonder why Bolling decided to transpose St. Louis Rag to another key. Lastly, The Entertainer's Rag by Jay Roberts...not to be confused with Joplin's The Entertainer...rounds out a well balanced program. Recorded sound is definitely high fidelity, although this reviewer, having listened to both mono and stereo versions on extremely high fidelity equipment, can see no justification for paying a premium for the stereo version.

-John Fairhead-

DETROIT RENT PARTY NO. 2

The party was held on Saturday, June 3 at Montgomery and Sons Piano and Organ Emporium, 18315 Santa Barbara - Detroit. The host was Mike Montgomery, who, along with his good wife Sue, made everyone feel at home. Guest of honor was Eubie Blake of 'I'm Just Wild About Harry' fame. What an amazing man and what a pleasure to meet him! Rudi Blesh was there and you felt just like you knew him after reading Buster Keaton and our 'bible' - "They All Played Ragtime". He is a brilliant man and contributed immensely to the party's success. The fine piano of Bob Wright, Bob Seely, Charlie Rasch as well as Mike Montgomery was heard, and, yours truly rambled a few rags.

Need I say any more, the party was a dandy! John Fairhead, your secretary and I had a marvellous time. We're both looking forward to next year's do.

- John Arpin -

SOMETHING DOING...

JOHN ARPIN - appearing at the Last Chance Saloon, Ports of Call, Toronto, Ont.

DON BURNS - appearing at the Holiday Inn, Delaware Ave., Buffalo, N.Y.

PERCY FRANKS - appearing at the Cherry Creek Inn, Denver, Colorado from Sept. 25 to Nov. 4.

GaLE FOEHNER - appearing at Bob Meyer's Last Chance Saloon, Lowell St., Rochester.

JOHNNY MADDOX - appearing at the Golden Nugget, Toronto.- Sept. 25 - Nov. 21.

MAX MORATH - frequently on Arthur Godfrey's morning show. Also, watch your local stations for up and coming Kraft Music Hall show featuring Max.

RAGTIME DOLLAR BILL - appearing at the Northern Hotel, Billings, Montana from Sept. 25th - Dec. Ist.

CHARLIE RASCH - appearing at Old Heidelberg, Ann Arbor, Michigan with Sister Kate.

TREBOR TICHENOR and THE ST' LOUIS RAGTIMERS - appearing at the Goldenrod Showboat in St. Louis.

Try to keep us informed, performers, as to where you will be working. Drop us a postcard and your whereabouts will be recorded on this page.

KERRY MILLS' TWO STEP MARCHES

A CHARACTERISTIC MARCH

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BY

KERRY MILLS

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"RASTUS ON PARADE."
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